

and significantly reduce homeowner's utility bills.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a question?

I would like to commend my colleagues for their support for energy efficiency programs that reduce residential energy consumption. Expanding the use of these technologies in our everyday lives is a commitment to our future and will create jobs in Ohio.

However, I am also concerned that adjusting underwriting or appraisal requirements without sufficient protections to ensure a family has the ability to repay their loan could have unintended consequences that put our housing market at risk, which I know is not the intention of the sponsors.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with the comments made by the Senator from Ohio. I also support the need for greater energy efficiency and applaud the sponsors of this amendment for promoting greater energy efficiency. At the same time, I do have some concerns.

Specifically, I am concerned about whether and how potential energy savings can safely be incorporated as part of the mortgage underwriting process at the FHA, especially when there may not be a consensus on how to define and accurately quantify future energy savings.

Another concern is the interaction of estimated energy savings in the underwriting and appraisal processes. This could happen because the SAVE Act requires expected energy cost savings to be used as an offset to certain regular expenses, such as property taxes, while also requiring the estimated energy savings of a home to be added to the home's appraisal. While not the intent of the authors, I am concerned that this could tilt the mortgage market towards more expensive products without adequate safeguards to protect borrowers.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, we would ask the sponsors of this amendment to work with us to ensure that we can accomplish our shared goals of encouraging investment in energy efficient homes while also maintaining a safe and sound mortgage market for homebuyers.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, moving forward, we intend to work with the Senate Banking Committee and HUD to address any technical or substantive concerns that have arisen. Specifically, it is our intention to ensure that FHA has the ability to insure loans for energy efficient homes while also including protections to maintain accurate evaluations of a borrower's ability to repay.

Additionally, as this amendment is being implemented, we understand that HUD's ability to test and modify the savings that may be counted should be considered. In fact, we considered these concerns while drafting this legislation. The methodology we included for measuring energy efficient savings is an ANSI certified standard and the

most widely accepted technology in today's marketplace. Over 1 million homes have already been energy rated using this technology. And this is the same underlying technology successfully utilized by the EPA's Energy Star program.

Again, we are pleased that the Senate passed our amendment, and we look forward to working with the Banking Committee and HUD on improvements.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed that my Republican colleagues continue to play politics with our judicial system.

There are currently 79 judicial vacancies in this country—28 of which are judicial emergency vacancies. In each of these districts across the country, Americans are waiting for their cases to be heard, but instead of justice, they are left hanging in the lurch.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Justice delayed is justice denied.

Senate Republicans refuse to act to confirm Judge Merrick Garland—who has more Federal judicial experience than any other Supreme Court candidate in history—to the Supreme Court, and they refuse to act on the 20 judicial nominees who were reported out of the Judiciary Committee by voice vote. It is outrageous that Senate Republicans stubbornly refuse to move these nominations forward, letting these accomplished and qualified nominees languish.

One of those judges is Mark Young, an excellent nominee for the Central District Court of California, which is ranked 11th in the Nation in weighted case filings per judgeship.

We need to fill this seat as soon as possible, and Judge Young is an extraordinary candidate. I was honored to introduce him at his nomination hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee last October and go over his impeccable resume.

He has served as a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge since 2008 and has 10 years of experience as a prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles.

He holds degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California Gould School of Law; and he has won numerous awards from organizations including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award—one of the Department of Justice's highest honors.

The people of the Central District of California need his leadership, and the overworked judges of the Central District need his help.

We also have two additional candidates from California who are awaiting Judiciary Committee hearings.

Judge Paul L. Abrams was nominated by President Obama in December

2015 to serve as the U.S. District Court Judge for the Central District. Judge Abrams is currently a U.S. magistrate judge for the Central District, a post he has held since 2002.

He began his career in private practice and then worked as a legal aid lawyer before serving in the Federal public defender's office, eventually becoming a supervising deputy Federal public defender. He holds degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, and Boalt Hall School of Law.

Judge Lucy Koh, currently serving in the Northern District, was nominated by President Obama for the Ninth Circuit Court in February of this year. The daughter of Korean immigrants and a Harvard graduate, Judge Koh began her legal career as a Women's Law and Public Policy Fellow for the Senate Judiciary Committee.

At the U.S. Department of Justice, she served as a special assistant to the Deputy Attorney General before spending 3 years as a Federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, where she was awarded the Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis J. Freeh Award for Demonstrated Excellence in Prosecuting a Major Criminal Case. She then spent 9 years in private practice. She served on the Superior Court for Santa Clara County until 2010, when she was appointed to the Northern District, becoming the first Korean American woman to serve as a Federal district court judge.

Each of these excellent candidates has flawless credentials, broad support, and they are ready to serve. So what are we waiting for? The American people cannot wait for justice—and they shouldn't have to.

Let's move forward with giving each of these excellent judicial candidates the consideration and vote that they deserve.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELEASE OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the release of the report by the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, better known as the Church Committee.

On this day in 1976, the first of five books detailing egregious abuses of power by the intelligence community was released by the Church Committee. The report was the first ever comprehensive oversight study of the intelligence community, which had operated largely without any oversight since its founding during World War II. Prior to this study, the Intelligence Committees did not exist in either the Senate or the House, and there was no formal apparatus to check the actions of the Nation's intelligence community.

The Church Committee truly was the first of its kind. It grew out of extraordinary circumstances during a period

of national soul-searching in the shadow of the Vietnam war and Watergate scandal. In the early 1970s, a series of abuses were revealed in the press, including an expose alleging that the CIA had been spying on antiwar activists around the country.

The American people were understandably outraged, and in response, the Senate convened a committee to conduct a comprehensive review of all intelligence activities.

The committee—under the chairmanship of Idaho Senator Frank Church, with Texas Senator John Tower as vice chairman—was comprised of 11 Senators and 133 dedicated staff members. Over the next 15 months, the staff poured over millions of CIA and FBI records to produce a 2,500-page report broken into 6 unique books, each covering a different topic including foreign assassinations, domestic spying, and an investigation into the killing of President Kennedy.

What they discovered was shocking, including vast abuses both domestic and abroad that showed the intelligence community operated outside the framework of the Constitution and undermined the Bill of Rights.

The committee found that, in the decades leading up to and including the 1970s, the CIA and FBI had been conducting a massive, illegal domestic spying operation, which included the following: The CIA opened and photographed over one-quarter million pieces of domestic mail, the FBI maintained extensive files on over half a million American citizens, and the NSA wiretapped all international calls from the United States and documented the callers.

In addition to mass data collection, the agencies conducted targeted operations as well. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., was the subject of an aggressive surveillance program overseen by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover sought to compile a detailed record of King's personal life in order to blackmail and delegitimize him as a public figure. King's phone was tapped without a warrant, for example.

The NAACP, Black Panthers, and antiwar groups were also all spied upon. In fact, President Eisenhower on several occasions received advanced copies of NAACP speeches from informants.

The abuses didn't stop at our border. The Church Committee uncovered evidence that the CIA had plotted or engaged in assisting in the assassination plots of the leaders of Cuba, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Chile, and South Vietnam.

In the Congo, the CIA reached the final stages of a plot to assassinate Patrice Lumumba and had even delivered poison to its agents. However, before the plan was carried out, Lumumba was executed following a coup.

Most infamously, the United States conspired in numerous plots against

Fidel Castro, though none were ever carried out.

The public airing of these—and other—allegations shook our country and our partners abroad and prompted swift action by Congress and the executive branch.

On February 18, 1976, President Ford issued Executive Order No. 11905, banning all assassinations. The order has stood ever since.

Within months of the release of the Church Committee report, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence was formed by a vote of 72 to 22. The committee was established to conduct constant and vigorous oversight over the intelligence community.

In addition, in 1978, Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act which established the FISA Court to oversee requests for intelligence warrants within the United States.

The Church Committee study revealed to the world the danger of allowing intelligence agencies to operate in the shadows and with unchecked power.

Our duty to conduct oversight is one I take very seriously. As the chairman of the Intelligence Committee from 2009 to 2015 and as vice chairman since 2015, I have undertaken this responsibility with the awareness that, without the efforts of the Church Committee, congressional oversight of the intelligence community would never have been possible. We must also remember that the Church Committee and its reports had their vocal and adamant opponents. Oversight is, at times, resisted, a fact we discovered firsthand in completing and declassifying as the Committee's Study of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program.

The legacy of the Church Committee report lives on in the study the Intelligence Committee released in 2014.

The study reviewed over 6.3 million cables, emails, memoranda, and transcripts. It is a documentary history of the CIA's words and actions in the years during which the CIA conceived of, carried out, and made representations about its Detention and Interrogation Program. The public is familiar with the report's 500-page executive summary and findings and conclusions that were declassified and released. The full study is over 6,700 pages long and includes 38,000 footnotes. To this day, critics of the study have not demonstrated a single factual inaccuracy.

Among many revelations, the study showed that, contrary to the CIA's claims, the use of torture was brutal and did not result in otherwise unavailable intelligence that "saved lives." It also demonstrated that the CIA provided inaccurate information about the program to the White House, the Department of Justice, to Congress, and the public.

Much like the Church Committee report before it, the study demonstrated the important role oversight plays in securing our country's commitment to the rule of law.

The importance of the work the Church Committee did back in 1975 and 1976 cannot be understated. Our government operates on the basis of trust from the American people. The oath each of us take in public service is to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The actions of the intelligence community leading up to the Church Committee violated that trust and must never be repeated.

Senator Church and his committee, in shedding light on these dark times, helped right the ship of American democracy and set an important example for all future Members of this body of how to conduct vigilant and thorough oversight.

101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 101st anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman Empire executed a deliberate massacre of more than 1.5 million Armenians. Over the course of 8 years, Armenians were marched to their deaths in the deserts of the Middle East, murdered in concentration camps, drowned at sea, and forced to endure unimaginable acts of brutality. These barbaric acts were systematic, methodical, and intentional.

More than 100 years have passed since the start of that horrific massacre, which an overwhelming number of academics and institutions have recognized as genocide, and there are countless testimonies from victims who lived to tell of their harrowing experiences.

Pope Francis called the massacre against the Armenians "the first genocide of the 20th century," declaring that "concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it."

However, despite an irrefutable body of evidence, the U.S. Government has refused to call the deliberate massacre of the Armenians by its rightful name: genocide.

For years, I have urged both Democratic and Republican administrations to acknowledge the truth of the Armenian genocide. Today I reiterate my call, and I hope that, this year, the United States will finally correct this century-old injustice.

By affirming the Armenian genocide, the United States would join more than 20 countries across the globe—including Russia, France, and Germany—as well as the Vatican and 43 U.S. States standing on the right side of history.

Recognizing the Armenian genocide is much more than a symbolic gesture. It will provide solace and relief to the descendants of the victims, particularly the hundreds of thousands of Armenian American citizens and residents. It will support a more equitable reconciliation between the Turkish and